



International Faculty Development
in the Health Professions



4th International Conference
on Faculty Development
in the Health Professions

Faculty Development:
Affirming Global
Connections and
Advancing Diversity

25-27 August 2017

Messukeskus Expo and Convention Centre
Helsinki, Finland

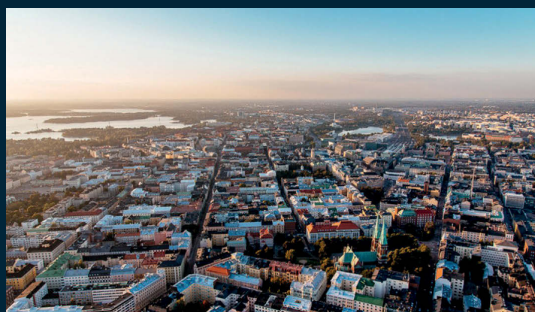
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AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION



Turun yliopisto
University of Turku



2C4 (143)

Recognising and responding to domestic violence: Exploring the role of student dentists

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Background: Student dentists' role in recognising and responding to domestic violence has not been investigated previously in Australia. The prevalence of domestic violence means that student dentists encounter traumatized women in their clinical practice, however, they report feeling ill-prepared for this role. A collaborative, innovative educational intervention is addressing this problem.

Summary of Work: The research aimed to explore dental students' perceptions of the clinical effectiveness and value of an innovative 'Recognise and Respond to Domestic Violence' educational intervention. A series of workshops were delivered by expert facilitators for Dental Surgery students. Dental student researchers employed a mixed method approach to evaluate this intervention.

Summary of Results: Findings indicated a significant increase in students' understanding and theoretical knowledge regarding domestic violence. They were enabled to embed awareness of domestic violence into clinical assessment. However, while recognition of domestic violence was achieved, further educational strategies are required to strengthen dental students' confidence in responding appropriately within clinical practice.

Discussion: The study outcomes inform the timing and educational content delivered within the Bachelor of Dental Surgery. The research supports embedding the domestic violence content into dental curricula. Students' capacity to respond to domestic violence is being strengthened through learning experiences including simulation and opportunities to practice techniques and employ strategies.

Conclusion: Recommendations from the 2016 study are being implemented and evaluated in 2017. Although the findings of this small study cannot be generalised, they suggest that other dental programs would benefit from a similar initiative that enables students to recognize and respond appropriately to domestic violence when practicing in community contexts.

Take-home Message: Dental professionals are in the unique position to identify domestic violence and and help manage its consequences. More emphasis is needed in undergraduate programs. Embedding domestic violence workshops, facilitated by experts, into the dental curriculum enables dental students to competently recognize and appropriately respond to women who experience domestic violence.